

## **Description of the Services for Independent Living (SIL) Program**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Services for Independent Living (SIL) program was established at the Agency in 1988 to enhance the quality of life for residents living in Agency-financed senior housing developments. The SIL program provides ongoing training, resources and opportunities to network with other social service coordinators. The mission of the SIL program is to enhance the quality of life for residents in Agency-financed senior housing developments through the provision of training, resources and guidance to onsite coordinators necessary to develop appropriate programs and services for residents and through the development, administration and evaluation of SIL programs in participating developments that acknowledge and facilitate the aging-in-place phenomenon.

The program is currently available in 70 buildings and serves approximately 10,000 residents each year. Through the SIL program, onsite service coordinators develop and/or coordinate services for residents such as transportation, personal care and health screening as well as recreational, educational and cultural activities. Agency staff partners with a wide variety of community, state and federal organizations including the Social Security Administration, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP), The New Jersey Anti-Hunger Coalition, the Senior Companion program, Rutgers School of Social Work and local hospitals and home health agencies. Recent program developments include the development of a Certificate in Senior Housing Issues with Rutgers School of Social Work, Continuing Education and Professional Development Program.

### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Any Agency-financed (either multifamily or tax credit funded) senior housing development is eligible to apply for participation in the Services for Independent Living (SIL) program.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- HIRING AN ONSITE SOCIAL SERVICE COORDINATOR
- IMPLEMENTATION OF MINIMUM STANDARDS OF SERVICES INCLUDING CASE MANAGEMENT, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH SCREENING PROGRAMS
- ATTENDANCE AT SIL WORKSHOPS AND SIL NETWORKING MEETINGS (HELD THREE TIMES A YEAR)
- ATTENDANCE AT THE ANNUAL NEW JERSEY FOUNDATION FOR AGING CONFERENCE (PAID FOR BY THE SIL PROGRAM)
- SUBMISSION OF MONTHLY REPORTS

Housing Sponsors will be required to sign a participation agreement that outlines the responsibilities of the owner/housing sponsor and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A SIL COORDINATOR**

A service coordinator is responsible for linking the elderly, especially those who are frail, or the disabled residents to the supportive services needed to continue to live independently.

The major functions of the service coordinator include:

- Provide information and referrals to residents and families on programs and resources on local, state and federal levels;
- Interview and screen residents for eligibility for programs and entitlements and assist with application procedures;
- Assess the needs of residents, including physical, mental, social and financial needs and develop a plan for service delivery;
- Monitor and evaluate service delivery, and reassess as necessary;
- Establish links with agencies and services providers, including the local county division on aging;

- Serve as residents advocate/liaison;
- Contact family members as needed to obtain information, discuss service arrangements, or to encourage family involvement;
- Plan and implement monthly programs and activities to meet the needs of residents, including establishment of social, educational and recreational programs; and
- Develop volunteer programs and informal support networks.

The qualifications of the service coordinator include:

- A degree in social work or gerontology is preferable, but other college degrees are acceptable.
- Two to three years of experience in social services delivery with senior citizens.
- Must exhibit a compassionate, understanding and professional attitude toward the senior citizen population.
- Excellent communication and organizational skills.
- Must have access to a vehicle to attend workshops and conferences and to meet with social service organizations.

### **MONITORING PROCEDURES**

Agency staff monitors SIL programs through ongoing site visits and review of the required monthly reports. SIL coordinators are required to submit annual documentation on the workshops, meetings and conferences attended each year.

**For more information, contact Maria DiMaggio at 609-278-7512.**

